

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 09895 131747Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 9895

DEPT ALSO PASS TO DR EHRLICH, OIH/DHEW

E.O. 11652: ADS DECLASS 12/31/78
TAGS: WHO
SUBJ: FUTURE OF WHO'S HEADQUARTERS PROGRAM COMMITTEE

REF: GENEVA 9636

1. REFTEL RECENTLY INFORMED DEPARTMENT OF THE IMPENDING, SIGNIFICANT PERSONNEL CHANGE IN THE WHO SECRETARIAT. DR. J. COHEN, CHIEF, HEADQUARTERS PROGRAM COMMITTEE, IS SOON TO BECOME, IN EFFECT, "CHEF DE CABINET" UNDER DR MAHLER AND DR LAMBO. MISSION HAS SINCE LEARNED (MAHLER INTERNAL MEMORANDUM DATED 16 NOVEMBER 1976) THAT THE HEADQUARTERS PROGRAM COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE UNCHANGED EXCEPT FOR REPLACEMENT OF DR COHEN (NOT YET SELECTED BY WHO).

2. MISSION BELIEVES MAHLER'S CONFIDENCE IN DR COHEN IS RICHLY DESERVED. DR COHEN IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE ONE BRILLIANT CONCEPTUALIST IN THE WHO SECRETARIAT. HE IS AN INDEFATIGABLE WORKER. HE HAS TOTAL DEVOTION FROM HIS SMALL HEADQUARTERS PROGRAM COMMITTEE STAFF, WHICH PROBABLY HAS THE HIGHEST MORALE IN WHO HEADQUARTERS, AND HE HAS RESPECT FROM THE ADG'S AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT. ONE REASON IS, HE IS GENUINELY MODEST IN ADDITION TO HIS BRILLIANCE, ANOTHER, HE INSPIRES TRUST AND CONFIDENCE BY HAVING NO INTEREST IN BACK-ROOM SECRETARIAT POLITICS; ANOTHER, HE IS TOTALLY COMMITTED TO THE WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION.

3. THE PROBLEM DR MAHLER MAY HAVE TO FACE NEXT YEAR
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PAGE 02 GENEVA 09895 131747Z

IS THE RECALL OF DR COHEN BY HIS GOVERNMENT (ISRAEL),

AS REPORTED TO MISSION IN CONFIDENCE BY ONE OF COHEN'S COLLEAGUES. COHEN IS APPARENTLY CONSIDERED TOO A-POLITICAL BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT, AND HIS LENGTH OF STAY AT WHO WILL DEPEND ON THE PARTY IN POWER.

4. MISSION ALSO BELIEVES MAHLER'S NEW ROLE FOR COHEN AS WELL AS HIS OVERALL POLICY AND STRATEGY PRESENTATION TO THE EB PROGRAM COMMITTEE IN NOVEMBER CAN BE INTERPRETED AS ONE MORE EXAMPLE OF MAHLER'S STILL-TO-BE-EXPRESSED WISH TO SERVE A SECOND 5-YEAR TERM AS WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL.CATTO

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